



Environmental Public Health Tracking News

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Oregon Environmental Public Health Tracking Program

Oregon Department of Human Services

Public Health Division

Office of Environmental Public Health

Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology Section

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Grant implementation - Year two

As Oregon Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) begins its second year of the program implementation grant, plans are becoming reality. The new information technology (IT) phase of building our tracking network has been launched.

The IT business plan, charter and requirements summary are complete. Our network architect has written his initial plan and our systems analyst is developing scope documents for data. The database analyst has begun database design and software selection.

Work is well underway to enhance the EPHT Web site and develop it as a portal that offers access to environmental public health data for Oregon. The database design will take shape concurrently and be tested for reliability, performance and accuracy of data transformations. Beta testing of the Web site, database and tools will take place in the spring of 2008. The Oregon and national Web sites are projected to be fully operational by September 2008.

It's an aggressive implementation plan with an estimated 12,000 hours of EPHT and Office of Information Services (OIS-IT) staff time involved. We look forward to the day that the Environmental Public Health Tracking network is fully operational.

This work by the Oregon EPHT team is leading toward a larger goal. That is to provide scientific information from a web-based network of integrated hazard, exposure and health-effect data to drive actions that improve the health of communities.

EPHT's efforts to combine and standardize local, state and national data sources of environmental and health information will allow scientists, communities, policymakers and the public to more effectively address fundamental questions about relationships between environmental exposures and health effects. Data from the EPHT network may be used to quantify the magnitude of environmental health problems, detect unusual trends and occurrences, document the distribution and spread of a hazard or health event, identify populations at risk, plan and evaluate protective and preventive measures, facilitate research, and detect the results of changes in health practices.

EPHT Program Staff

Mary Scott
Program manager

Rodney Garland
Senior research analyst

Mandy Green
Epidemiologist

Karen Worden
Administrative specialist

Marina Counter
Research analyst

Shawna Job
Systems analyst

Meet the core Oregon EPHT staff

Oregon EPHT has recently completed a hiring cycle in preparation for an eventful year (see diagram). Readers who have not looked in on us recently will want to note the changes.

Mary Scott, mary.s.scott@state.or.us, joined the staff in May as the new program manager. She has more than 18 years of experience working with special populations, managing federally funded non-governmental organizations and providing lead fiscal oversight to health care corporations. Mary is a Certified Public Accountant, holds a master's in business administration, a nursing certificate and degrees in accounting and sociology/social work.

Mandy Green, mandy.k.green@state.or.us, accepted the epidemiologist position in June. Many readers will remember her as the Oregon Technical Advisory Group representative from Clackamas County Community Health Division, her prior employer. Mandy has a graduate degree in public health. In addition to local health department work, she has experience with community-based participatory research and public health GIS.

Karen Worden, karen.worden@state.or.us, has moved from other duties within the department to EPHT. She is providing administrative support to EPHT. Karen has a bachelor's in education with a minor in biology.

Rodney Garland, rodney.garland@state.or.us, has moved into the role of lead research analyst. Rodney worked for 12 years for federal environmental agencies before joining the Oregon EPHT program. In addition to a bachelor's of science in fisheries science, he has a master's in geography. He holds a graduate certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

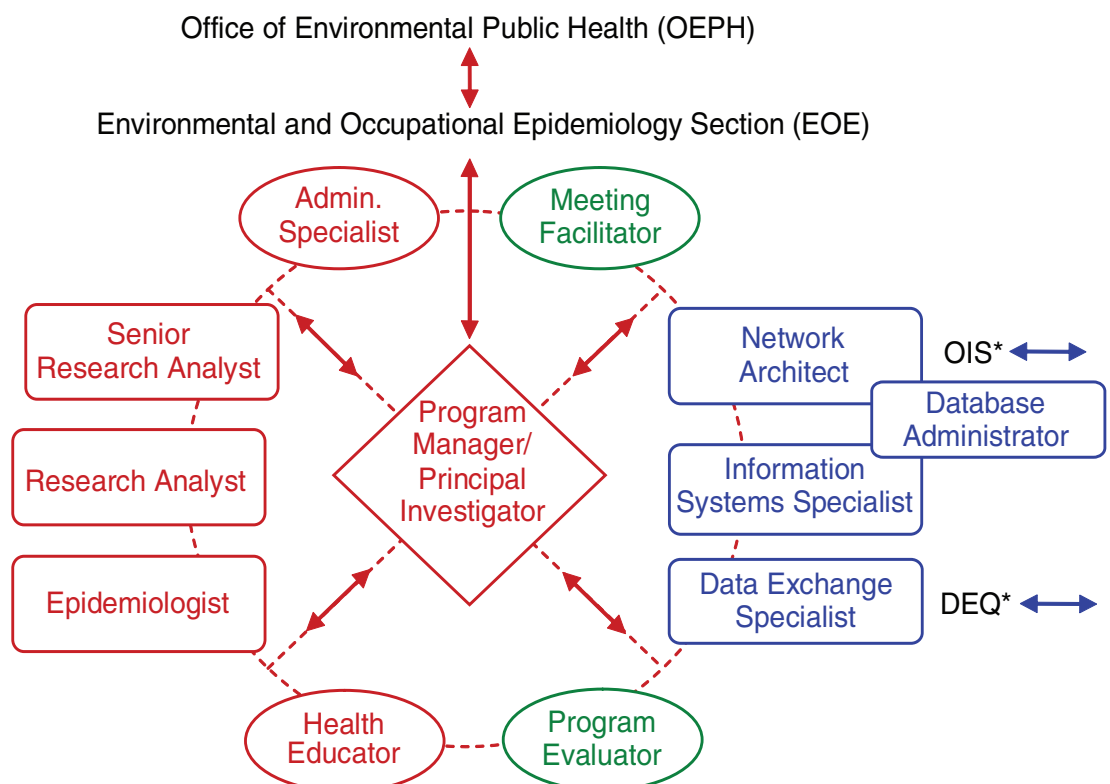
Marina COUNTER, marina.counter@state.or.us, joined EPHT as a research analyst in February. Marina has two master's degrees, in biostatistics/epidemiology and psychology. She also has a graduate certificate in GIS. She has worked at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as an epidemiology fellow and in academic, health care and business settings for 22 years.

Our core staff includes several Office of Information Services IT professionals. The IT group is providing the technical know-how to transform our tracking network plans into reality.

- Systems Analyst - Shawna Job
- Network Architect - Paul Aneja
- Database Analyst - Krishnan Seshadri

We also have two dedicated partner staff. **Curtis Cude** continues to work with us from his office at Department of Environmental Quality. **John Dougherty** provides communications training and ongoing program evaluation.

This diagram shows the organization of Oregon's EPHT Program. Core EPHT positions are indicated in red, dedicated staff from partner agencies are in blue, and contracted services are in green. The program manager/principal investigator position is designated by a diamond, technical positions are shown as rectangles, and support positions as ovals.



Join us at upcoming Environmental Public Health events:

November 8, 2007 — Howie Frumkin, Director of the National Center for Environmental Health will give presentations on the public health implications of global climate change. Noon at GSA Auditorium, 911 NE 11th Ave, Portland. 6 pm at Portland State University. For details, contact Pete Farrelly at 971-673-0462.

November 8, 2007 — Oregon Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. Second meeting of the Oregon Technical Advisory Group (OTAG). OTAG helps to guide Oregon EPHT for implementation of environmental public health tracking. More information available at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/epht/Meetings.shtml>.



EPHT 101

The CDC's Tracking 101 course is now available online. This is a wonderful teaching tool about environmental public health and the tracking network. You can find the course at <http://www.nehacert.org> under "CDC Programs" (left navigation bar).

Registration is free, and continuing education credits are offered at a cost. Each module is one credit hour and the cost is \$10 per credit hour. Thanks to all the Oregon EPHT partners who gave us valuable feedback during the development of EPHT 101.

National Workgroups

EPHT is not only working to bring tracking to Oregon, but we are also contributing to the national EPHT network. This means lots of conference calls with EPHT staff from other states, CDC, and partners to work on content; standards and network development; analysis and visualization; and outreach. Each Oregon EPHT staff member participates in between one to 10 calls each month. Oregon is an active contributor to the national network, which means that our efforts to create our local network are disseminated beyond the borders of our state.

This diagram shows the four major national workgroups and their related subgroups—more than 20 workgroups in all.



Legislative Session - 2007

The 2007 session resulted in several other major accomplishments for environmental public health in Oregon

- Goals for greenhouse gas reduction: a new state commission was formed to reduce global warming pollution and new standards were adopted requiring 25 percent of our energy to come from renewable sources by 2025.
- Clean Diesel Initiative to retrofit and replace polluting diesel engines in school buses, big trucks, construction and farm equipment.
- Expansion of the Oregon Bottle Bill to cover the 126 million plastic bottles discarded annually in landfills.

National EPHT work session

Several Oregon EPHT program staff members will attend a national EPHT work session in New Mexico in November 2007. We will participate in three full-day sessions to work out the nuts and bolts of building the 17 state networks that are part of the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network.

Oregon Public Health Division Drinking Water Program expands

The Oregon Legislature passed legislation to increase funding to state and county drinking water programs and to establish a statewide Drinking Water Advisory Committee. This is good news for public health.



The changes will improve service to public water system customers throughout the state, and assure Oregon residents continue to have safe and healthy drinking water. For more information on this legislation, see the Oregon Public Health Connection e-bulletin at <http://egov.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/lhd/bulletin/vol2no7.pdf>.

Environmental and public health updates

EPA proposing to change ambient ozone regulations

In June 2007, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed lowering the current ozone standards, which were last changed in 1997, to increase public health protections and prevent environmental damage from ground-level ozone.

Ozone is a gas formed at ground level, generally by motor vehicle exhaust and industrial emissions, but it can also be formed by any natural sources of oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds exposed to sunlight. Ground-level ozone exacerbates a variety of health problems such as bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.

If approved, the proposed change will take effect in 2010. To learn more about the EPA proposed ozone standards change see <http://www.epa.gov/air/ozonepollution/naaqsrev2007.html>.

Trading Partner Agreements

We have been working hard over the past several months to establish Trading Partner Agreements (TPA) with data stewards. We use a standard template and work together to complete an agreement that covers the major issues related to data exchange, such as content, format, access, stewardship, and use limitations.

Thanks to all our trading partners for collaborating with us to create environmental public health tracking in Oregon.